

REINCARNATION

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THE LESSONS OF WAR

Many of the antagonistic thoughts and feelings of nations may be balanced, nullified and left forever as enlightenment increases. When war comes the unresolved clouds of animosity take physical form in events which the historian records.

By the facts of a war, brought home to cities, villages, families and insistently presented to the philosophic thinker the lessons of war are learned. These facts of war are irrefragable and convincing. The people may see at a glance to what horrors of suffering jealousy, hatred and greed may bring them.

Hence these precipitated thoughts and feelings—realized in objectivity—lead men back in lessons learned to the worlds of thought and feeling. How fortunate if this hideous, painful excursion from plastic, easy worlds to rigid, painful realms may yield a little of accepted truth for the mass of men.

W. V-H.

*THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE LEGION BUILDING**

It has been a number of months since the construction of the building in which we stand was begun. We have tried to build the small structure carefully and with strength to endure. With the passing months we shall give the building its finishing touches.

As we assemble in it we think with deep gratitude of those who made possible, with funds and with personal effort, the realization of our need in actual brick and stone. You know many of those who have been of this company of workers; some of them do not wish their names disclosed.

It has been asked, "Why do you need a building in which to do your work?" The reply is this:

A movement of consequence needs a center of activity and some solid token of its permanence, its dignity and guarantee of serious purpose. Moreover, the making and the maintenance of records demands proper, undisturbed housing without undue risk of loss. And a light, comfortable and well-located working place for the officers of the organization and their aids is a prime necessity.

The building in which we find ourselves meets these requirements.

We are within a thousand feet of the shore of Lake Michigan; we have air, light and a quiet outlook. Our building is almost fire-proof and

*An address delivered on January 8, 1915, at the opening of the Karma and Reincarnation Legion Building.

has a very large storage vault which is quite incombustible. There is abundance of office-room for our resident workers as well as desk space for those members who may visit us, as some have done, and carry on their study and research at Headquarters.

We wish to make here a permanent place for the gathering of the data and the literature of karma and reincarnation, together with such material objects as we may properly gather for the study and the teaching of these basic facts of human life.

We wish then, as time passes, to catalog on cards the books and documents which the world possesses, dealing with the facts of this phase of the World Philosophy. As many as possible of these books and documents we wish to place in our archives. You can see what might be accomplished in a few decades if we could shoulder forward steadily on this task.

Of course we do not wish to enter upon this great effort for our own gratification alone. Our purpose is to gather solely for the purpose of dissemination. Already we have distributed much of printed knowledge in many forms and in many lands. We have let our brook of forces almost run dry, hoping that the dews of heaven will fill them up again.

We have not yet struggled hard to gain the membership in our *Legion* that we need. We have offered our membership freely to all who wished it. Bye and bye we shall have energy and funds, we trust, to press our work abroad through the world as seems wise.

The contact that we wish to make with the

world is massive. We wish especially to disseminate the truth in the simplest ways for the ignorant and the foolish as well as the learned and the wise. It is not our purpose to convert to our beliefs so much as it is to make widespread the bare existence of *karma* and *reincarnation*.

Hence we shall not need costly equipment or the limitation and support of an elaborate organization. We shall look for aid to those who will come forward freely and willingly, driven by the force of inner conviction and interest and not by the whips of parties.

For these reasons we seek to draw no man to our aid who is tied to antecedent obligations. We wish our effort to interpenetrate many other organizations and activities of the world without disrupting them.

A distinctive feature of our work at this time is to be found in the fact that we wish, as already intimated, to contact men by thousands and tens of thousands. We are not the first to spread the principles for which we stand. So we have a field already somewhat cultivated. We wish, in this epoch, to give our words to the many, to talk, to lecture, to give printed matter to masses of men and women and then to pass on to others rapidly, making innumerable swift contacts and delegating close and intimate instructions to special workers.

For the furtherance of the great purpose of the *Legion* we have set up this building.

W. V-H.

THINKING ABOUT ONE'S KARMA

It is well for beginners in the study of karma and reincarnation to think a little about the karma which they are making day by day, and a little also about those happenings and events which come to them, not caused by themselves directly and not expected. Such study will quickly convince any open-minded man that the law of karma is a wonderful reality in the lives of men.

But it is very necessary that we should not allow ourselves to fall into mental and astral ruts or undesirable habits in thus watching with interest and wonder the outworking of the karmic results of various causes, known and unknown. In particular we should not allow ourselves to become passive and confirmed in an attitude of contentedly complaining of our "bad karma." It is natural for man to be always seeking for some resting-place, some stage of peace and quiet from disturbing elements; but it is well for us if we can once for all time decide that resting-places are not for us to seek, that we will learn to feel at peace within, even while on the outside fierce struggles may be shaking our bodies continually.

Let conditions be ever so unfavorable for us to do what we really want to do from our very inner being, we will accept the inevitable only for the present moment, reserving to ourselves the divine right to change it swiftly into better forms and modes of being.

We admit the inevitableness of karma but we also remember always that the rigidity of karma is but for the moment. The future is in our own hands to mold and shape as we will.

THE IMPORTANT THING

"Father," said the young man, as they sat by the wayside and watched men, women and children going by, each with some purpose in mind, "what is the important thing in life?" "Ah! my son," exclaimed his father in reply, "you have asked a question important and profound, the question of all ages.

"The masses of men seek the comfort of body, the satisfaction of the appetites and the ease of life. Many there be who seek the better things, the contentment of mind, the love of friends and the reward of virtue. A few, however, seek the life for the sake of the life, that is, to live for the good of others, the helping of the world and the glory of God. This is the Important Thing."

"Is not such a life empty of joy?" "On the contrary, it is full of joy of such a quality as the masses of men cannot know." "Is not such a life wearisome?" "Not so, for one who has found the Important Thing never wearies and ever abides at rest."

"What profiteth a man who lives such a life?" "Ah, that is hard for the people of the world to understand, for his profit is in his loss and his gain in his sacrifice. One who lives the true life loses attachment for the things which most men crave and finds his very existence in the service of men and the helping of others that they, too, may find Wisdom."

"Can such a realization come to all men?" "Not in its fulness in one life, and yet with God all things are possible. Man is divine and he is human, and that the human may become divine,

many lives are necessary, for only by learning the lessons of life may men attain to Wisdom. To learn the lessons of life, the man must go to school and there are many days of school, each day of which is the span of a life."

"Is this life one of my days?" "Yes, and that you should seek to know what is the Important Thing is evidence that you have gone to school many days, my son.

"The masses of men who find satisfaction in the pleasures of the senses are the younger souls. The many who live lives of virtue and strive to do right are older, but those who, like yourself, seek the Important Thing are the very old souls, for one must have tired of the material things to hunger for the spiritual, and only old souls seek the Truth."

"Shall I live again and learn yet more of the Wisdom?" "Truly yes, for Wisdom is like the ocean, its depths are fathomless, and like the space about us, is immeasurable, and while man is man he will ever seek Wisdom, and when he has become a god, he will ever seek Wisdom."

"Are there many gods?" "Yes, my son, for as there is a mineral kingdom, a vegetable kingdom, an animal kingdom and a human kingdom, so is there a divine kingdom, and when man finishes his work in the human kingdom, he enters into the divine kingdom."

"Is this what the Blessed Lord meant when He said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all things shall be added'?" "Yes, my son. A man who seeks the kingdom of heaven seeks the divine kingdom and finds it when he enters it, but the seeking covers many lives and as a man strives

to live for others and not for himself, he comes into a realization of the divine kingdom. The seeking is sometimes referred to as treading the way, and all men are welcome to tread the way, and though it is not an easy way, yet it is said that angels, human-garbed, walk with men and thus they help the travellers."

"Father! You and I are on the way?" "Yes, my son, and many times I have known the companionship of angels clad in human garb and They have known that I recognized them and were glad."

"Would that all men had found the way." "All men shall find the way, my son. God's love will not let one, even one, of His children lose the way utterly; therefore in time, though it take many lives, every man shall tread the way."

"When I have lived this life and go for a time and come back to earth, shall I still be on the way, my father?" "Yes, my son; man can never lose the way, once having found it."

"Then it must be true that any man, whether he be rich or poor, of high or low estate, may tread the holy way to God?" "That is indeed true, my son; and no matter how many mistakes a man makes, he may tread the way, for our Lord said to all the world, 'Come unto me!,' and He is the Way."

"One who travels the way lives the life of service to his fellows and is kind even to animals and plants, for he sees God in all creatures and seeks to serve the One in the many. Any man or woman, boy or girl, may tread the way that leads to God, and he may begin to-day by doing a kindness, and by seeking Wisdom and by giving thanks to God."

D. S. M. Unger.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD MATTER

Much has been said and written about the sacredness of all life and our responsibility toward it, but it seems as if the importance of matter had not been sufficiently emphasized. To be sure, life is the great reality in nature, but matter is the limitation of life and it is necessary for life to gain experience within the limitations of matter. In this sense one might hold that life included everything, matter being merely an appearance, or illusion.

This is, however, hardly the practical and sensible way of dealing with the facts of our everyday world. It is well to philosophise, and look at nature from a higher stand-point; but we must learn to deal with material facts in a direct way. As long as we live in bodies we must regard the objects of our world as realities for that part of our being which is to gain experience and skill in dealing with these objects.

Matter and life are so closely associated that neither can exist without the other. They are the outside and inside of one and the same thing. They appear in our consciousness because of the limitations of space which are imposed upon it, for certain periods. We may train and modify life, and in so doing we shall also train and modify matter. Or we can study matter and learn its laws, so that we may master and control the machinery of nature, and in doing this we also influence the life which is within matter. Influencing life may be the most powerful and efficient way, but working on matter is certainly the easy and natural method for most people, as they may

then see more of what they are accomplishing.

To the man who has firmly grasped the truths of karma and reincarnation and the evolution of all life, there is no need to explain that we human beings have a great responsibility with reference to all living beings. Many people, however, do not fully understand that all is life and everything is alive, even the rocks and atoms of physical matter. Even those who do believe this, may not have fully realised this and made it a part of their own inner world. It is therefore helpful to point out the function of matter in evolution.

Matter is composed of many particles held closely together by some force which is called cohesion. The smallest physical particles which may exist freely by themselves in nature are the molecules of matter. The smallest units which may take part in a chemical change or reaction are termed atoms,—a word which means indivisible. There are many different substances, called elements, which have atoms that are all alike in the one element, but differ from the atoms of all other elements. But recent scientific study has shown that the so-called atom is not a single indivisible unit. It has been found that an atom is much more like a solar system, composed of a great many smaller bodies which are whirling around some central point or body with prodigious speed. Many kinds of atoms can actually be disintegrated step by step, giving rise to many different new “elements” which are usually more or less unstable, and tend to break up or change into certain more stable conditions. This would indicate that the atom itself is in process of evolving, even in its physical form.

The student of karma knows well that he is constantly affecting matter by his actions, his feelings and his thoughts. Through his own bodies many energies pass from the higher to the lower worlds, and perhaps also from the lower to the higher. He directs these streams of energy into various channels and while they are passing through his bodies he colors them somewhat, so to say, with his own qualities.

Then there are the atoms which make up the material of the man's bodies. These may remain for some considerable time associated with him and share to some extent in his life and consciousness. Thus the physical atoms take part in the movements of the man's physical body and bear the shocks and impacts from the outside world or environment in which the man is placed. The matter in his astral body vibrates to the emotions in which he allows himself to indulge, and is thus trained to respond easily to certain vibrations which are habitual to him. And his thoughts similarly afford exercise for the matter in his mental body. Moreover the man radiates energy outward into space from all his bodies, and this energy is absorbed by the matter outside him.

It is quite clear that man profoundly affects matter. According to his qualities will he influence similarly the matter of his surroundings. He trains matter in ways that may be good or evil. Matter is indestructible, because it represents energy limited to certain forms,—therefore man must be largely responsible in the evolution of matter.

May it not be possible that sometime in the distant future ages the man, now become a god,

will build a universe out of the matter that he has greatly influenced in his own climbing to perfection? May not the painful suffering of many living beings in that universe be a natural consequence of his present undesirable influence on the matter of his bodies? And when his future worlds meet with great difficulties in the evolution of the future, will not the Creator of that universe find difficulty in his own higher evolution, which depends upon, or is intimately associated with the evolution of the worlds of matter of that universe?

C. S.



PAMPINA

Lying by the summer sea
I had a dream of Italy.

Chalky cliffs and miles of sand,
Dripping reefs and salty caves,
Then the sparkling emerald waves,
Faded; and I seemed to stand,
Myself an old-timed Florentine
In the heart of that fair land.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

THE NEW YEAR

The new year is growing up. It has already left the nursery stage and men have temporarily ceased to express to one another the customary wish that the year may be gracious to all. It is thus with all recurring feasts, and unquestionably it is well that our road in life should be mile-stoned with anniversaries. They serve to draw our attention insistently to the distance travelled, and bid us forget our little wearinesses of the moment and gaze over the noble landscape of the world.

How goodly a thing is this new year festival in its compulsion towards a universal sending forth of good will. Like some great sun shining upon the shallows of life it lifts to heaven wreathing clouds of many-tinted thoughts, which enwrap the earth in an atmosphere of grace. If vibrations were visible, how tangled would seem this maze of myriad messages emanating from love and friendship at the close of each year!

Yet rightly considered there is little reason to impel the adoption of a fixed date for the expression of good will. Time, as viewed by men, consists of various periods—hours, days, weeks, months, years, cycles—concentric circles, the lesser contained within the next larger measure. And since each of us may commence the drawing of a circle at whatsoever point in the circumference seemeth good, it follows that no moment of time has necessarily a fixed nature; albeit we mark out our pathway in life by definitions.

All races through all ages have differed in the commencing point of their measurements of time.

To an astronomer our day begins at noon, although the civil day dies and is reborn at midnight. The Egyptian began his week with Saturn's day, whereas we have chosen as the start the day of the Sun. The limits of the month are subject to many variations depending on questions connected with lunations or arbitrary rules. And the duration of the solar year is neither accurate under the Gregorian calendar; nor do all nations agree upon its commencing date.

It is obvious, therefore, that, save for compliance with civic conveniences, there is no true ending or beginning to a year. Is not each day equally entitled to be viewed as its opening? And in the same way that each day dies and is reborn at midnight so is it with our lives. Death would seem to be merely an agreed moment in the calendar of evolution; and for each of us a new period commences precisely at that moment. So must it be throughout the almost infinitely long journey of evolution. Every change from one condition of existence to another offers, under the laws of karma and reincarnation, merely the ending of one period of experience and the immediate starting of another.

If this thought were logically pursued how idle would it make the tears which are oftentimes shed at death. May we not see more clearly that the thoughts which belong to that moment are those which should greet the dawning of a new year—a new space or period in the calendar of him who, under the guidance of karma and reincarnation, takes the continuance of life at that particular date in a new phase. No year grows old, then, for it is ever like the hours of paradise,

beauteous and young, showering upon us its gifts of wider hope and fuller opportunity, and "rung in" by the never-ending benediction of God.

J. B. Lindon.

THE GOOD IN PEOPLE

"Mr. So-and-so is a man from whose presence I run as fast possible," said a friend. "He is so noisy, crude, overbearing and cruel that I do not wish to see him; yet he is successful!"

We have to try to remember that men differ not only in their respective degrees of development but that they differ in actual soul-type or quality. In Mr. So-and-so you have a man who normally revels in the use of power, just as another may be happiest in quiet thought.

Such a man as Mr. So-and-so may in a lifetime or two be no longer brusque and gross in method, half afraid of his own inadequacy, but may use his power, conscious of his right to use it, of his limitations of power and his proper place in the life of his day. Such a developed man, though far from perfect, compels respect and gains the confidence of his fellows.

A few lives—how many we do not know—can effect great changes in the ego if the man strives to learn the deeper meaning of our existence.

Altruism is most helpful in the earlier stages of the soul-struggle. It leads away from cruelty and brutality and invites the teaching of the happy applications of force to the needs of men.

W. V-H.

THE ITALIAN EARTHQUAKES

Karma is the great law of nature. It guides and brings about all adjustments of disturbed conditions. Nothing happens by mere chance; everything has a reason and is the logical outcome of all the circumstances of the past which bear on the thing and have led up to it. This does not mean that everything that happens is predestined or predetermined, but it does mean that it is the single resultant of all the influences which are concerned in the result.

We know that nations have their own karma just as have individual men. Nothing that affects a whole nation can happen accidentally: it is the necessary outcome of all the past history of the nation, including all its preceding incarnations. There is a reason for everything that happens, and it is a part of human evolution to learn *why* things happen and to learn *how* to help bring about those results which will most help the evolution of the whole world. To become skillful workers in the great work of the universe,—that is the highest goal to which human beings, and other beings as well, can aspire. For there is a great work to be done, and it will be accomplished in the ages of time, but the co-operation of all men is needed and the more intelligent their co-operation is, the sooner and the easier will be the doing of this great work of the world.

Therefore men do well to study events and their causes. It is necessary. The wisdom of action is the wisdom which all beings of the universe must learn. It can not be learned and mastered unless a careful study is made of the law

of karma and of its working in nature, in the worlds of actions, of emotions and of thoughts.

To study karma with the greatest advantage it must be studied impersonally, or from a universal point of view. The individual must try to rise above the limitations of his tiny, personal life into a consciousness which includes all lives. This is impossible, as a rule, for men who have not freed themselves from their own karma. Yet it is highly necessary that students of karma should make strong efforts to do this; for it is only through long and constant striving that progress in this direction can and will be made. It is always possible to try to recognize our limitations of personality and make allowances for them before making decisions.

In studying the karma of definite events which profoundly affect the lives of individuals and of nations, it is highly desirable to refrain from drawing definite conclusions as to the causes of the events. It is one thing to study a question and see some plausible explanation; it is quite another thing, and a serious mistake, to say or believe that our explanation is the true one. We should not allow ourselves to reach a fixed conclusion or belief until we have freed ourselves from our karma, which acts like colored glass in distorting rays of light and shutting out others.

What is the actual karma or effect of making premature or prejudiced decisions as to the karmas of events? It confirms us in our inability to know the truth; therefore, it strengthens the bonds which prevent us from becoming free. It weakens our insight into the workings of karma.

It is by all means to be avoided,—utterly.

Let us illustrate these remarks by considering the karmic problem of the Italian earthquakes. The Italian nation has suffered great loss of life and property. The principles of karma teach us that nothing happens without due cause; that nobody may suffer without having done something which brings about the suffering. We reap as we have sown. We deserve just what we get. And what we get is always for our best,—that is, for the best of our larger evolution as permanent human beings,—no matter whether it is regarded by our personalities as good or evil.

Suppose we try to decide just why the earthquake disaster overtook Italy. If our own karmic limitations lead us to feel greater sympathy for the cause of the allies than for their opponents, we might perhaps be tempted to think that the duty of Italy as a nation was to have joined the allies early in the holy war against German militarism and world-domination. We might argue logically as follows: Italy should have sacrificed some fifty thousand lives of brave soldiers for the high ideal of the welfare of humanity. It would have been a small price to pay, for the result achieved would have been enormous. Italy had this chance, it was her karma to lose some fifty thousand lives, but she selfishly neglected this great opportunity, preferring to wait for a more favorable time to step in and obtain large spoils of war at small cost. Now karma has claimed its due and has taken away from Italy the fifty thousand or so of lives in a way which brings her no gain whatever. Verily, a nation must look to her duty, or her karma will be terrible! Behold the karma of Italy as an awful example to nations!

But now suppose we have strong karmic ties of love with the German nation and admire its high destiny. Then we might easily argue in this wise: England, desirous of crippling the growing power of the German nation, which she hates unjustly, welcomed the opportunity to inflict a great injury upon her rival while Germany was already engaged in war with Russia, France and Belgium. Her excuse was that she must remain true to her pledges of honor in the Triple Entente. It was now clearly the duty of Italy to carry out similarly her pledges to Austria and Germany in the Triple Alliance. But Italy selfishly and cowardly held back, and was even preparing to enter the great war on the side of the allies. Do you wonder that this perfidious treachery should bring about the present catastrophe of earthquakes? Could it have been better timed as a warning that Italy has acted wrongly? Did you not see the cartoon by McCutcheon in which the map of Italy was shown as a leg with boot and spur and heavily bandaged over the suffering region, and the whole entitled "It May Prevent Marching"? Verily, a nation must look to her duty, or her karma will be terrible! Behold the karma of Italy as an awful example to nations!

What would a neutral student of karma say? He might say that he does not believe that either of these explanations is worth serious consideration. We do know that the world is suffering under a heavy load of karma. To many nations it has come as war; to Italy, as a natural catastrophe,—a way which does not cause her to harm other nations, and therefore preferable. As to the causes, they may be far back in the past. *L. B.*

IN THE GARDEN HOUSE

Evening Thirteenth

Inquirer: Why is there such a great power of thought? Almost all people of the present day would admit that there is such a thing.

Student: Thoughts have great power to accomplish results because they represent a very subtle form of energy. Scientists define energy to be the capacity for doing work. Now, thoughts do not act directly on physical matter, but they largely determine the conditions under which physical work shall be carried on. The workings of thought are in the visible world; men can not see them as objective realities in the physical world. Thus while most men would perhaps admit an influence due to the thoughts of men, they would not regard them as objective facts which may be used and dealt with in similar ways as the objects of the physical world.

Inq.: It must be true that thoughts may vary in their capacity to accomplish results. And is it not true that they may be of different natures or qualities, just as physical energy may be in the form of compressed steam, in swiftly moving fly-wheels, or in electricity?

St.: Yes, that is quite true. It is well to think of thoughts as structures having form and shape, and as being composed of various kinds of mental matter, — sometimes coarse and sometimes very delicate; sometimes very enduring and again as very flimsy and easily falling to pieces. Creating thought-forms is very much like building houses. Much depends on the strength of the material used and perhaps still more on careful workman-

ship. A house that is carelessly thrown together will not endure as long as one that is more carefully built, even out of material not so good.

Inq.: Is mental matter of various grades of density? Or has it no density?

St.: Yes, we can speak of density, and there are grades which differ among themselves just as much as do the solids, liquids, gases and etheric matter of the physical world. Moreover, there are different qualities of matter, both in the mental world and in the physical world. That is to say, some of the matter may be alike in form, mass and outer appearances, while the energy within may be of various kinds or qualities. This difference would appear in the colors of the thought-forms, or rates of vibration of the energies within them. One form might stimulate another person in his love nature; another one like it, but of different colors, might influence him to action, while a third one might lead him to thinking. Thoughts differ just as persons differ.

Inq.: Does a person who thinks thoughts really create these corresponding thought-forms?

St.: Yes, that is why thought is said to be creative; and our thoughts are said to be our own offspring, with which we people the mental world which surrounds us. However, we do not create thought-forms out of nothing, but merely shape a certain amount of free mental matter into a form. This we do through imparting energy of vibration to this matter, giving to the resulting thought-form something of our own life.

Inq.: I suppose that it is our mental body which we use in the construction of thought-forms, much in the same way as we use our physical body to

construct our buildings in the physical world?

St.: Yes, very much in the same way. Only the process is much more direct. How it is done is something of a mystery, but we may suppose that a thought-form is shaped by a sort of stationary system of waves which are reflected from the boundary of the mental body, which is an ovoid. To build up combinations of physical matter out of raw material takes much time and is at best an awkward process; but in constructing thought-forms very little time is required if the thinker has carefully trained his mental body to accuracy and skill. Thought is commonly regarded as an instantaneous process. This is probably not true, but the speed of thought, or activity in our mental body, is so great that it can not be measured, at least not with physical instruments.

There is another great difference between building with physical matter and forming what we call thoughts: in the physical world you make your constructions and combinations outside your own physical body; in the mental world you build your thought-forms right in your own mental body. This is due to the fact that physical matter can usually not interpenetrate other physical matter, while mental matter can do so to a wonderful extent. This means that you can exert only an indirect influence on physical objects; but your thought-forms may and do partake of your own being, and they are always colored by your own special qualities of character.

Inq.: Can you explain how thought arises and what happens in the various stages of thinking?

St.: Not very fully; much of this is rather occult and belongs to that in us which is related

to even higher worlds than the mental. The will, that mysterious inner being, comes into the activities of thought in ways which we could probably not understand even if they were told to us.

We must recognize that our thinking activities are only possible because we have trained the matter of our mental bodies for long ages of time. Our present mental body has thus learned to respond readily to certain vibrations and to enter easily and swiftly into certain combinations. In fact, we have long ago passed through what may be called the beginnings of our mental development. And at the same time we are now only the merest beginnings of what we shall be in mentality in the ages of the future.

A thought, we may say, is a definite and strong vibration of the matter of our mental body. This vibration, or rather a combination of several rates of vibration, taking place in the mental body, results in the production of a definite form, filled with living energy. You have probably seen how grains of sand on a vibrating metallic plate, supported at a single spot, will arrange itself in beautiful geometric figures. Regular waves of water playing over a sandy beach will mark out regular forms on the sand. This gives us a clue to what happens in a vibrating mass of matter, such as the mental body, whose form is ovoid, and maintains a definite boundary, where there may be reflections of mental energy back to the interior of the body. We have no reason to be surprised at the formation of thought-forms of definite shapes, forms and colors. We know that the energies of nature, usually as life, very easily enter the limitations of form, or matter. C. S.

PRAYER AND KARMA

Many earnest Christians have asked themselves and others, "What does it mean that so many nations are praying to God to give them the strength to destroy their enemies? Are the people who are praying for peace praying without faith, or is God punishing them for their sins by not listening to them? Have all our efforts for peace been wasted?"

The teachings of karma and reincarnation are so illuminating and helpful in just such questions as these, that it will be well worth while to inquire what prayer means and then try to give the answers to the questions.

Prayer is energy sent to God for the purpose of obtaining some desired result. It may be of various kinds, according to the kind of energy made use of, which generally corresponds to the nature of the desire which prompts it. We may broadly classify all prayers in two great divisions, namely, personal prayers and impersonal prayers.

Personal prayer is that into which the personality of the man enters, in which the thing that is prayed for will benefit this personality directly or make it more happy. Impersonal prayer is such that the personality of the man who prays is not thought of, or involved in the results which are desired.

Now, as karma is the chain of causes and their effects in which the man's personality is involved and by which it is affected, and as karma (as we use the term technically) is limited to the worlds of the personality,—the physical, astral and mental worlds,—therefore it is clear that a

personal prayer will affect these three lower worlds and bring about results therein, which, of course, means that karma is generated. But an impersonal prayer does not directly affect the three lower worlds, in which karma is working. Its energy is of a higher kind, and does not generate action in the worlds of the personality.

Karma is of two kinds: it may help or hinder the evolution of life. It is not desirable that there should be no karma, but it is well to act so that karma shall be transcended the sooner. It is possible to act in the lower worlds without making karma, that is to act impersonally, but to do this it is necessary to be a perfected man, one who has mastered the laws of nature and is able to live in the worlds above those in which the personality dwells and grows.

These considerations enable us to see clearly that the prayers of ordinary men are quite complex. They are usually mostly personal and partly impersonal. The energies which are made use of are likely to belong to various worlds: the worlds of desire, of concrete thought, of abstract thought and of universal love. Thus most prayers will in large part generate karma, and only in a small way transcend karma.

There is a Supreme Being, but we believe that He governs the world and its affairs through that wonderful result of His will,—the Law of karma, and its administrators. It is true that no prayer is unheard, but it is not true that every prayer is literally granted or fulfilled. Every prayer carries with it some energy, be it energy of desire, of thought, of universal love or of pure will. If it did not carry with it some energy it would

not be worth calling a prayer at all. Now, energy is never lost; it must expend itself toward accomplishing the result for which it was sent forth. The energy is only transmuted to another state when it causes a result. But the result may not be forthcoming: for the energy sent out may not have been sufficiently strong; or there may have been obstacles that it encountered, that is to say, old karma, which must first be neutralized, balanced or overcome. This uses up some or all of the energy, transmuting it into other conditions.

What can we say, now, as to the questions asked at the beginning of this writing? Whole nations are praying to God for victory; does this mean anything, and if so what? Obviously both parties can not obtain the result they pray for. What determines the result which will happen?

We would say that the prayers will all have due results, under the workings of the law of karma. It is not a personal God who will hear the prayers and grant victory to the nation which prays with the greatest earnestness or faith. But the energies sent forth by the nations in their prayers must all be used and accounted for—not the least part of them can be annihilated. Their use and application is guided by intelligent beings who administer the workings of karma, bringing about the necessary results in such ways as will best serve the purpose and plan of evolution. Certain events may become inevitable, but the manner in which they are to occur and the time of their happening may be selected by authorities who permit karma to work itself out in the ways most favorable for the spiritual advancement of all beings in the world.

If a nation prays for victory, it must necessarily pray largely in a personal or selfish way. It is theoretically possible that the prayers of one nation might be so intense, so earnest, so full of faith, representing so much energy, that the karmic result would be inevitable, irresistible, and the nation would be swept on to victory. For this to occur it would, however, be necessary that there should not be too great an amount of hindering karma which must first be overcome. It is thus possible, sometimes, for a nation literally to pray its way to victory. The question arises at once, "Is this really well and good, or will the selfishness of the national prayer bring about great evil results also?"

We may at once conclude that there must necessarily be evil results. The nation that prays selfishly for personal advantage and glory does not trust the Good Law to bring to it what it deserves. This is to be deprecated, but we must not think that there is nothing of good in the selfish national prayer. There will always be a great deal of patriotism, and that is partly unselfish and idealistic. It would be unwise to say that on the whole the cry of a nation to its God is mostly evil, for we have not the means of knowing how much of the energy of the prayer is selfish and how much is idealistic.

To doubt the efficacy of prayer is to doubt the great law of conservation of energy. To expect the desired results to happen immediately is to overlook the influence of past karma as well as the power of the prayers sent up to God by the opposing nations, who have their karmic rights also. It is also to doubt the ability of the minis-

ters and viceregents of God to deal with karmic necessities in arranging and ordering them.

To the person who prays unselfishly for peace we would say that his prayers cannot be wholly lost, if he really prays earnestly and means what he says. We hope that the nations will soon learn not to pray for selfish ends, nor to go out to execute those prayers and reap their proper and karmic results. And to the person who prays for peace we would like to put these questions: Are you quite sure that peace is always the best thing to happen? Would you not rather pray, as did the Roman emperor-philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, "Oh Universe, may my will be as Thou willest!"?

C. S.

KARMA IN GEORGE ELIOT'S WORKS

He was a noteworthy man, that Prior of San Marco, "thinks our spirit," somewhat arrogant and extreme, perhaps, especially in his denunciations of speedy vengeance. Ah, *Iddio non paga il Sabato* (God does not pay on a Sunday)—the wages of men's sins often linger in their payment.

From the Proem of Romola.

Savonarola to Romola: "And you say, 'I cannot bear my bonds; I will burst them asunder; I will go where no man claims me'? My daughter, every bond of your life is a debt: the right lies in the payment of that debt; it can be nowhere else. In vain will you wander over the earth; you will be, forever, wandering away from the right."

COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAD

An article by Sir Oliver Lodge appeared in a recent number of the Sunday *Chicago Examiner*, and we take great pleasure in quoting a number of extracts. Sir Oliver is a well-known English physicist, who has carefully investigated various phases of spiritualism and psychical phenomena.

Some believe that there is nothing higher in the universe than man, that he is an outcome of this planet and ceases to be with this planet, ceases to be, indeed, at the end of his life on this planet; that his existence is very ephemeral, that there is nobody to look after him, nobody that understands the universe better than he does; that he understands all about it, that he could have made it if he had been called in, and that he represents the highest product of evolution—as, in fact, he is the highest product of terrestrial evolution at the present time—and that therefore nothing higher can exist.

Now these people, although they do not know it, are really living in an age of barbarism. Their belief is appropriate to the time when the earth was regarded as the center of everything, when the universe was the earth, and that which was the highest on earth was the highest in the universe, when all other things, such as stars and sun, were mere appendages to the earth and of very little importance. That was the pre-scientific view.

But science has put all that out of court, made it unreasonable, irrational. Now we know that there are other worlds, and that there may be beings on them. And are those all the beings

that exist? Is it to be supposed that every intelligence in the universe must be like us, have bodies like us made of matter? There is no such limitation likely; certainly there is no such limitation proved. We may mention it as possible, but we cannot dogmatize about it. If you make assertions of that kind, you are stepping outside the scientific world and dogmatizing in a negative direction.

For what does science show? It shows a magnificence of law and order in world upon world. The revelation of the skies is typical of a grandeur of existence that we might easily have missed.

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But excluding a thing from your attention does not exclude it from the universe; and because you have not explored it, have not attended to it, have not found it out, by no means shows that it is not there. Mind you, some nations have attended more to spiritual things than to the others. The East has very much to instruct the West in. We can instruct them in business habits and in practical life; they can instruct us in things relating to the soul and meditation. They enter into the silence and meditate a great deal more than we do.

The union of the East and West which is coming about is greatly to be desired. They will learn something from us; we must see to it that we learn something from them. And now that we are beginning to come together, the progress of those portions of humanity who have so long been separated and have carried on their process of evolution isolated from each other, making

discoveries of different kinds, will be more rapid than ever before.

Man does not dominate the universe, does not even understand it. He is groping his way in it and finding out things about it. He has found out, for instance, recently many things which everybody now knows when you mention them—radium, X-rays, something of the nature of electricity; he is beginning to understand the structure of atoms. These seem like new things, but they are not new. Radium has been there all the time, so have X-rays; only recently we found them out. They would have been there just as much if we had not found them out. And there is a quantity of things we have not found out.

How old is science? A very few centuries. A great deal of our science developed in the nineteenth century. One century!—what is that? This is not the time to deny; the thing is to explore and find out what is. What is there is there all the time, whether we deny it or not; it makes no difference to the universe whether we deny it or not; it may make some difference to ourselves.

We do not understand the structure of the atom, but we are exploring it, and it is very remarkable that atoms have a structure. They used to be thought of as hard ultimate units something like marbles, but very, very small. Now we know they are not that, but are more like solar systems. There is a regular astronomy of the inside of the atom. The atom is a very complicated structure with law and order permeating it all through. Just as the planets obey laws, revolving round the sun, so the electrons obey laws, revolving

round the nucleus of the atom. The laws are not very dissimilar.

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We get glimpses, and, if we cultivate our faculties, we get more and more, and by the process of inspiration we get help and assistance in understanding things which else would be beyond us. The ordinary material methods are not the only methods. Through all time the great and inspired men have had visions, have had intuitions, have perceived realities, and have tried to record what they have seen, for the benefit of others. This is the way in which we have to explore some of these things. That, at any rate, is the method of religion. I do not say that is the way I myself have been investigating. Those channels, perhaps, are denied to me, but I have arrived at conclusions not very dissimilar by more ordinary scientific processes.

(To be concluded)

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate—
That, when this life is ended, begins
New work for the soul in another state,
Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins:
Where the strong and the weak, this world's
congeries,
Repeat in large what they practiced in small,
Through life after life in unlimited series;
Only the scale's changed, that's all.

Robert Browning.